

#### REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application as amended.

The title of the invention has been amended, as required by the Examiner.

Claims 26-30 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen et al. (Chen) in view of Forbes et al. (Forbes). The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 31 is acknowledged with appreciation. Claim 31 has been maintained in dependent form in view of the allowability of base Claim 26, as discussed below.

Claim 26 has been amended to clarify the invention intended to be claimed. Specifically, Claim 26 has been amended more particularly to recite that each memory cell is a multi-bit memory cell including, inter alia, a memory gate formed over a first semiconductor region with a first insulating film and a second insulating film interposed therebetween, a plurality of data bits being stored in the memory cell by trapping electrons at one or more of a plurality of selectable portions of the second insulating film beneath the memory gate. See, e.g., Figs. 1(A) and 1(B).

In contrast to Applicants' invention as set forth in amended Claim 26, Chen relates to a single-bit memory cell structure. Forbes, like Chen, relates to single-bit memory cells and therefore cannot overcome the deficiencies of Chen with respect to Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 26.

Accordingly, the rejection under § 103(a) should be withdrawn and Claims 26-32 should now be allowed.

Claims 33-40 have been added in order to provide more comprehensive protection for certain aspects of Applicants' invention. Independent Claim 33 also recites the use of multi-bit memory cells, thus distinguishing patentably from Chen and Forbes as will be appreciated from the discussion of Claim 26 above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application now be passed to issue.

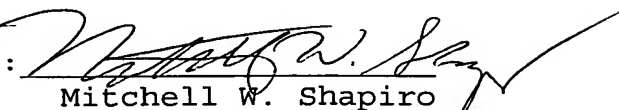
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paper and has not been requested separately, such extension  
is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MWS:sjk

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